bird alone hatches the eggs, and for some time afterwards accompanies the young. The cock when on the nest lies very close; I have myself almost ridden over one. It is asserted that at such times they are occasionally fierce, and even dangerous, and that they have been known to attack a man on horseback, trying to kick and leap on him. My informer pointed out to me an old man, whom he had seen much terrified by one chasing him. I observe, in Burchell's Travels in South Africa, that he remarks, "having killed a male ostrich, and the feathers being dirty, it was said by the Hottentots to be a nest bird." I understand that the male emu, in the Zoological Gardens, takes care of the nest: this habit therefore is common to the family.*

The Gauchos unanimously affirm that several females lay in one nest. I have been positively told, that four or five hen birds have been actually watched and seen to go, in the middle of the day, one after the other, to the same nest. I may add, also, that it is believed in Africa, that two or more females lay in one nest.† Although this habit at first appears very strange, I think the cause may be explained in a simple manner. The number of eggs in the nest varies from twenty to forty, and even to fifty; and according to Azara to seventy or eighty. Now although it is most probable, from the number of eggs found in one district being so extraordinarily great, in proportion to that of the parent birds, and likewise from the state of the ovarium of the hen, that she may in the course of the season lay a large number, yet the time required must be very long. Azara states,‡ that a female in a state of domestication laid seventeen eggs, each at the interval of three days one from another. If the hen were obliged to hatch her own eggs, before the last was laid, the first probably would be addled; but if each laid a few eggs at successive periods, in different nests, and several hens, as is stated to be the case, combined together, then the eggs in one collection would be nearly of the same age. If the number of eggs in one of these nests is, as I believe, not greater on an average than the number laid by one female in the season, then there must be as many nests as females, and each cock bird will have its fair share of the labour of incubation; and this during a period when the females probably could not sit, on account of not having finished laying.§ I have before mentioned the great numbers of huachos, or scattered

* It appears, also, from Mr. Gould's late most interesting discoveries regarding the habits of the *Talegalla Lathami*, (an Australian bird, one of the Rasores,) that several females lay in one nest, and that the eggs are hatched by the heat engendered by a mass of decaying vegetable matter. It appears that the males assist the females in scratching together the leaves and earth, of which the great conical mound or nest is composed.

† Burchell's Travels, vol. i. p. 280. ‡ Azara, vol. iv. p. 173.

§ Lichtenstein, however, (Travels, vol. ii. p. 25.) states, that the hens begin to sit when ten or twelve eggs are laid, and that they afterwards continue laying. He affirms that by day the hens take turns in sitting, but that the cock sits all night.

eggs; so that in one day's hunting the third part found were in this state. It appears odd that so many should be wasted. Does it not arise from some difficulty in several females associating together, and in finding a male ready to undertake the office of incubation? It is evident that there must at first be some degree of association, between at least two females; otherwise the eggs would remain scattered at distances far too great to allow of the male collecting them into one nest. Some authors believe that the scattered eggs are deposited for the young birds to feed on. This can hardly be the case in America, because the huachos, although often found addled and putrid, are generally whole.

2. Rhea Darwinii. *Gould.*

Plate XLVII.

Gould, in Proceedings of Zoological Soc. 1837, p. 35.

R. pallide fusca, plumâ singulâ distinctâ semilunari notâ candidâ terminatâ; capite collo, femoribusque pallidioribus: rostri culmine augusti, ad apicem latiore, frontes plumis parvis setosis anticè directis et supra nares extensis; tarsi lateribus in dimidiam partem plumis parvis mollibus tectis; tarso ⅔ antice posticeque toto, squamis reticulatis tecto.

Long. tot. 52 unc.; *alæ*, 30; *tarsi*, 11; *rostri*, 2.

The whole of the plumage light brown, each feather with a decided crescent-shaped mark of pure white at the extremity; head, neck, and thighs lighter; base of the neck blackish; culmen of the bill narrow, becoming a little broader towards apex; front with small bristly feathers, pointing forwards and reaching over the nostrils. Tarsus with small downy feathers on sides, extending half way downwards; upper two-thirds of front of tarsus, and whole hinder side, with reticulated scales.

Habitat, Eastern Patagonia (Lat. 40° S. to 54° S.)

This species, which Mr. Gould, in briefly characterizing it at a meeting of the Zoological Society, has done me the honour of calling after my name, differs in many respects from the *Rhea Americana*. It is smaller, and the general tinge of the plumage is a light brown in place of grey; each feather being conspicuously tipped with white. The bill is considerably smaller, and especially less broad at its base; the culmen is less than half as wide, and becomes slightly broader towards the apex, whereas in the *R. Americana* it becomes slightly narrower; the extremity, however, of both the upper and the lower mandible, is more tumid in the latter, than in the *R. Darwinii*.